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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-seventh session
URGENT NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE
NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY
GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT
REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS
ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Letter dated 29 January 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the statement of 27 January 1992 by the President of the Russian Federation, B. N. Yeltsin, entitled "Russia's Policy in the Field of Arms Limitation and Reduction".

I should be grateful if you would have this statement circulated as an official document of the Security Council in connection with the Security Council Summit Meeting, to take place on 31 January 1992, and also as an official document of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under the agenda items entitled "Urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty", "General and complete disarmament" and "Review of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth special session".

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

Annex

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, B. N. YELTSIN, ENTITLED "RUSSIA'S POLICY IN THE FIELD OF ARMS LIMITATION AND REDUCTION"

27 January 1992

My address today is devoted to a vitally important issue.

I am referring to practical measures by Russia in the field of arms limitation and reduction.

Our position of principle is as follows: nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the world must be eliminated.

Of course, this must be done gradually and on an equal footing.

In this vitally important task, we are open to cooperation with all States and international organizations, including cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.

The measures which I shall speak about today have been prepared on the basis of ongoing cooperation with the States participating in the Commonwealth and are in accordance with the agreements reached at the meetings of their leaders in Minsk, Alma-Ata and Moscow.

Russia considers itself the successor to the USSR with regard to the responsibility for carrying out international obligations.

We reaffirm all the obligations under bilateral and multilateral agreements in the field of arms limitation and reduction which were signed by the Soviet Union and are currently in force.

The leadership of Russia confirms its commitment to the policy of radically reducing nuclear weapons and ensuring the maximum security of nuclear arms and all installations related to their development, production and maintenance.

Russia is putting forward an initiative to establish an international agency for the reduction of nuclear weapons.

At subsequent stages, this agency could gradually assume the task of monitoring the entire nuclear cycle, from uranium mining and the production of deuterium and tritium to waste storage.

The measures which we are undertaking in the field of disarmament do rot in any way undermine the defence capability of Russia or the States of the Commonwealth. The specific aim is a reasonable minimum sufficient level of nuclear and conventional weapons.

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This is our main principle in building armed forces.

Its implementation will make it possible to save considerable resources. They will be used for civilian purposes and to carry out reforms.

Today, conditions are ripe for taking a number of major new steps aimed at arms reduction. We are taking some of them on a unilateral basis and others under conditions of reciprocity.

We have done and intend to do the following as a matter of top priority:

First, in the field of strategic offensive arms. The Treaty on strategic offensive arms has been submitted for ratification to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation. The process of ratification of the Treaty has also begun in the United States. I consider that the implementation of this highly important document, including its adoption by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, must be carried out as expeditiously as possible.

But even before the entry into force of the Treaty, Russia has taken a number of major steps aimed at reducing its strategic arsenal:

- About 600 land-launched strategic ballistic missiles, or almost 1,250 nuclear devices, have been removed from stand-by alert;

- 130 underground launching silos for intercontinental ballistic missiles have been eliminated or are about to be eliminated;

- The missile launching installations on six nuclear submarines are ready for dismantling;

- Programmes for developing or modernizing several types of strategic offensive arms have been terminated.

The strategic nuclear arms deployed in the territory of Ukraine will be dismantled in shorter periods of time than previously planned. The corresponding agreements have been reached.

I would emphasize here that this does not involve unilateral disarmament on our part. The United States is taking parallel steps on the basis of goodwill.

Nevertheless, it is now possible and necessary to make considerably more progress in this direction.

The following decisions have been recently taken:

- The production of TU-160 and TU-95 MS heavy bombers is being halted;

- The production of existing types of long-range air-launched cruise missiles is being halted. On a reciprocal basis with the United States, we are prepared to renounce the development of new types of such missiles;

- The production of existing types of long-range sea-launched nuclear cruise missiles is being curtailed. No new types of such missiles will be developed. At the same time, we are prepared - on a reciprocal basis - to eliminate all existing long-range sea-launched nuclear cruise missiles;

- We are halting exercises using a large number of heavy bombers. This means that no more than 30 may be used in a single exercise;

- The number of nuclear submarines equipped with ballistic missiles on combat-ready patrol has been halved and will be further reduced. We are prepared to halt, on a reciprocal basis, the practice of combat-ready patrolling by such submarines;

- Within a period of three years, instead of seven years, Russia will reduce, to an agreed level, the number of strategic offensive arms on stand-by alert;

- In this way, we shall reach the level provided for under the corresponding Treaty four years earlier.

If there is mutual understanding on the part of the United States, we could make even speedier progress in this direction.

We believe that the strategic offensive arms still in the possession of Russia and the United States of America after the reduction should not be aimed at targets in each other's territory. In the next few days, important talks will take place with the leaders of the Western countries. Proposals have been drawn up for a new, deep cut in strategic offensive arms, which will reduce them several-fold, to 2,000-2,500 strategic nuclear weapons on each side.

We hope that the other nuclear Powers - China, France and the United Kingdom - will also join in the process of nuclear disarmament.

Second, tactical nuclear weapons. Major measures have already been undertaken, in parallel with the United States of America, to make cuts in these weapons.

Production of nuclear warheads for ground-launched tactical nuclear missiles, nuclear artillery shells and nuclear mines has recently been halted. Stocks of such tactical nuclear munitions will be eliminated.

Russia will eliminate one third of its sea-launched tactical nuclear weapons and half of its nuclear warheads for ground-to-air missiles. Steps have already been taken towards this end.

We also intend to cut by half the stocks of air-launched tactical nuclear munitions.

The remaining air-launched tactical nuclear weapons could, on the basis of reciprocity with the United States of America, be removed from the fighting units of the front-line (tactical) air forces and located at centralized storages bases.

Third, anti-ballistic missiles and space. Russia confirms its adherence to the Treaty on anti-ballistic missiles. It is an important factor in the maintenance of strategic stability.

We are prepared to continue open-minded discussions of the United States proposal on limited non-nuclear anti-ballistic missile systems. Our principle is well known. If this will strengthen strategic stability in the world, and Russia's security, we will support such an approach.

I also declare Russia's readiness, on a basis of reciprocity with the United States of America, to eliminate existing anti-satellite systems and to work out an agreement for a total ban on weapons specially designed to attack satellites.

We are prepared to work out jointly, and then to establish and jointly operate, a global defence system to replace the Strategic Defence Initiative.

Fourth, nuclear weapons tests and the production of fissile materials for use in armaments. Russia is resolutely in favour of all nuclear weapons tests being prohibited. We are abiding by the one-year moratorium on nuclear explosions proclaimed in October 1991, and we hope that the other nuclear Powers will also refrain from conducting nuclear tests. An atmosphere of mutual restraint would promote the reaching of agreement not to conduct such tests at all.

In the interests of finally resolving this problem, we may, while gradually phasing out tests, propose to the United States of America a renewal of the bilateral talks on the further limitation of nuclear-weapons tests.

Russia intends to continue implementing the programme for halting the production of weapons-grade plutonium. Industrial reactors for the production of weapons-grade plutonium will be shut down by the year 2000, and some of them, under an accelerated timetable, as early as 1993. We confirm our proposal to the United States of America to reach agreement on a monitored cessation of the production of fissile materials for weapons.

Fifth, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery. Russia reaffirms its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including those devolving on it as a depositary. We are counting on the early accession to the Treaty, as non-nuclear States, of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, and also of the other States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Russia declares its full support for the activity of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and advocates a strengthening of the effectiveness of its safeguards.

We intend to take further steps to ensure that our exports do not lead to the proliferation of means of mass destruction.

Work is now under way on Russia's adherence to the principle of "comprehensive IAEA safeguards" as a condition of our peaceful nuclear exports.

Russia intends in principle to join the international regime for the non-proliferation of missiles and missile technology. We support the efforts of the "Australian group" with respect to the monitoring of chemical exports.

The Russian Federation proposes to adopt domestic legislation regulating the export from Russia of "dual-purpose" materials, equipment and technologies which could be used to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as military missiles.

A system is being established for the State monitoring of such exports. We shall institute the closest cooperation and coordination among all States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States on these issues.

Russia supports the guidelines for trade in armaments approved in London in October 1991.

Sixth, conventional weapons. The Treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe has been submitted to the Russian Parliament for ratification. The other States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States to whose territory the applicability of the treaty extends also attach importance to ratifying it.

Russia confirms its intention, jointly with the other States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States, to reduce the armed forces of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by 700,000 in actual strength.

Russia attaches great importance to the talks currently under way in Vienna on strength reductions and confidence-building measures, and also to the new talks on security and cooperation in Europe.

The latter could become a full-time Europe-wide forum for seeking approaches to the establishment of a collective Europe-wide security system.

Russia, in cooperation with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, will seek to reach agreement in negotiations with China on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in the frontier region.

It has been decided not to hold in 1992 major manoeuvres involving more than 13,000 troops, and this not only in the European, but also in the Asian, part of the territory of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

We also hope that there is a possibility of signing in the very near future a treaty on an "open skies" regime.

Seventh, chemical weapons. We are in favour of the earliest possible conclusion - in 1992 - of a global convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. This is needed in order effectively to bar the possession of chemical weapons, without impairing the lawful economic interests of the parties.

Russia is abiding by the agreement signed with the United States in 1990 on the non-production and destruction of chemical weapons. However, the deadlines it specifies for the destruction of such weapons will require some adjustment.

All the chemical weapons of the former USSR are located in the territory of Russia, and it will take responsibility for destroying them. We are preparing a State programme for this purpose.

We are ready to cooperate in this matter with the United States of America and other interested countries.

Eighth, biological weapons. Russia is in favour of the strict implementation of the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons, the establishment on a multilateral basis of an appropriate monitoring mechanism, and the implementation of measures to build confidence and promote openness.

In view of the fact that the implementation of the Convention is lagging behind, I declare that Russia repudiates those parts of the reservations which relate to the possibility of retaliatory use of biological weapons. They were made by the USSR to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the prohibition of the use in war of chemical and bacteriological methods.

Ninth, the defence budget. Russia will continue to make substantial cuts in its defence budget and to apply them to social issues.

In 1990-1991, defence expenditures in comparable prices were already reduced by 20 per cent, and within this figure expenditures on the purchase of armaments and technology were cut by 30 per cent.

In 1992, we intend to cut military expenditures by a further 10 per cent (in 1991 prices). The volume of arms purchases in the coming year will be approximately half that for last year.

Tenth, conversion. Russia welcomes the international cooperation in the field of conversion of military production, and believes that it should be intensified.

For our part, we will encourage such cooperation by establishing a "most favourable treatment regime" and instituting tax concessions for relevant joint projects.

Citizens of Russia!

I have just described the Russian Federation's plan of action in relation to arms reduction and disarmament. I hope it will enjoy your support and meet with understanding on the part of all peoples of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

I am convinced that it is fully in the interests of our country and the other States of the world. If it can be made a reality, our life will become not only more tranquil and secure, but also more prosperous.

A few hours ago the President of the United States of America, George Bush, addressing the American people, made a proposal for a radical reduction in nuclear potential and the strengthening of measures to promote stability in relations between our countries.

He and I have had preliminary consultations on these matters, and are engaging in a dialogue on the practical implementation of this policy and of the initiatives that have been put forward. It is apparent that the positions of the two sides are not far apart.

This augurs well for success in reducing offensive nuclear weapons.

Thank you for your attention.